

# Positive *or it's pointless*



## Fact Sheet

### Supportive Parents – getting the most out of sport

#### Getting the most out of sport

Giving your children the opportunity to play sport could be one of the best gifts you ever give them. Consider the benefits:

#### Health benefits

- Develops a wide range of motor skills e.g. balance, running, catching, kicking, jumping, throwing
- Improves co-ordination, flexibility, strength and fitness
- Develops healthy and active habits that will influence future lifestyles
- Helps manage a healthy weight
- Encourages healthy growth of developing bodies.

#### Social benefits

- Improves confidence and self-esteem
- Develops cooperation and teamwork
- Opportunity to have fun and meet friends.

#### Personal benefits

- Improves concentration skills and ability to manage anxiety and stress
- Increases capacity for learning and productivity
- Develops values such as respect, fair play and personal excellence.

#### What children want

Children want to have fun, learn new things and be with their friends. Children have a great sporting experience when parents, coaches and officials are positive and supportive.

#### Children want their parents to:

- Support them and give them encouragement
- Be proud of them, no matter what
- Understand their sport and be interested and involved
- Come and watch them play
- Be realistic about their abilities and skill level.

#### Children don't want their parents to:

- Embarrass them through abusing coaches, officials or other children
- Yell critical comments during or after the game
- Pressure them to set goals or achievements.

#### Strategies for game day

##### Before the game

- Encourage your children to have a go, do their best and have fun!
- Tell them that you are proud of them, no matter what the outcome
- Remind them to treat every person like they would like to be treated.

##### During the game

- Cheer for your children and recognise good play – even if its another team member or an opponent. There are other parents watching the game too and they will appreciate your good sportsmanship
- Keep it positive, don't criticise or give instructions from the sidelines
- Respect the decision-making of the coaches and officials.

# Let's make junior sport positive everyday

## After the game

- Congratulate your children, their team and coach
- Thank the other team and the officials
- Ask your child if they had fun and what they learnt. Listen to what they have to say and let them tell you if they want extra help
- Congratulate your children on their good plays and achievements, encourage them where they have identified their own mistakes.

## Communicating with coaches

- Always support the coaches by not speaking negatively about them in public, especially in front of your children
- If you want to clarify a decision, wait until after the game:
  - let your emotions settle before speaking to the coach, and explain your query
  - let the coach respond without your interruptions and listen
  - agree to a resolution even if you agree to disagree!
  - make opportunities for future discussion
- Leave the coaching to the coaches. Remember they have training
- Recognise that the coach is likely to be a volunteer. Find ways to appreciate them for supporting your children in sport.

## Communicating with officials

- Respect the decisions of the officials. Remember they may have a clearer perspective than you and they are doing the best they can
- If you want to clarify a decision, wait until after the game:
  - discuss with the team coach or manager about the best approach
  - remember to let your emotions settle before speaking and listen to the official's response
  - recognise that the officials are likely to be volunteers. Find ways to appreciate them for supporting your children in sport
  - treat the officials the same way you would like to be treated if you were in their position.

## Everyday strategies for parents

Take a look at some of our suggestions and see what you can do to support your children and let them get the most out of sport.

- Get the family involved. Your children will love it if you could all get active and healthy together. Perhaps you could join an open sports team or be an assistant coach, official or run the canteen
- Be proud of your children, especially when they have a go at something new, or make a mistake but have the courage to try it again
- Balance your enthusiasm. It's great to cheer and be excited but check with your children just in case they find it a little too much
- Revisit your club 'Code of behaviour' to see what values the club has about parent support. If your club doesn't have one, why not encourage them to implement one? Visit Play by the Rules website at [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au) for an example
- Practice with your children at home, watch games with them on television or take them to a state or national level game
- Listen to your children. Make sure they know you support them in their sporting pursuits and are interested in their goals, aspirations and challenges. Ask them if they would like to try other sports or activities
- Leave the coaching to the coach. If you are really keen, perhaps speak to the club and see how you can get training or become a volunteer
- Watch a game... or two... or all! Your children will love to have you on the sidelines cheering for them – no matter what the score! Other parents and children are watching and learning from your behaviour
- Remember that children want to have fun. Ask them if they had fun before asking them if they won
- Come along to training sessions and cheer. You can use this opportunity to talk to the coach and see how you can support your children at home.

In partnership with